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# University Eligibility as a Percentage of all High School Students

ITEM 12  
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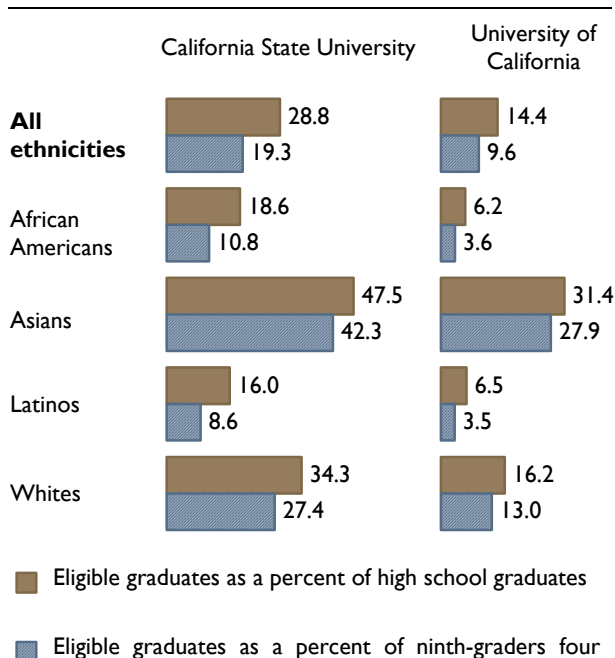
## Low high school graduation rates for African American and Latino students widens the eligibility gap

The Commission's recent eligibility study showed that university eligibility rates for African American and Latino high school graduates increased substantially between 1996 and 2003. Although this is welcome news, eligibility rates do not tell the full story about access to a university education. Because a lower proportion of African American and Latino ninth-graders complete high school and graduate, the gap in access to a university education is wider than indicated by eligibility rates based on high school graduates. The eligibility gap is particularly wide for male students.

Despite recent gains, eligibility rates for African Americans and Latinos are well below the rates for Whites and Asians. Only about 6 percent of African Americans and Latino high school graduates are eligible for the University of California, compared with 16 percent of White graduates and 31 percent of Asian graduates. Eligibility rates are defined as the percentage of California public high school graduates meeting the minimum requirements for admission to the University of California and the California State University.

### Eligibility rates, 2003

Percent of graduates versus percent of ninth-graders

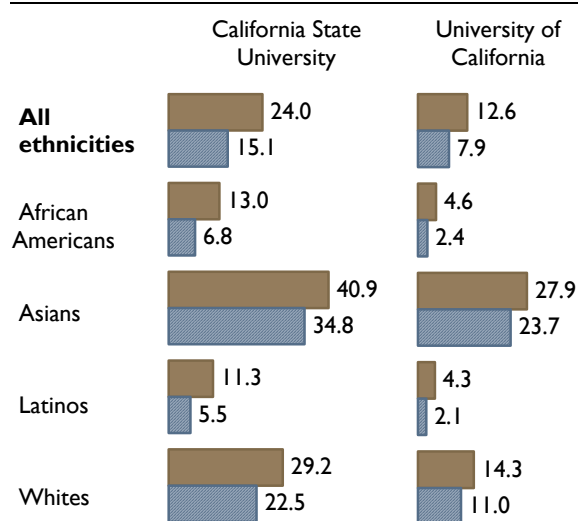


The eligibility gap is wider when we look at eligibility as a percentage of all students who enter high school. A much lower percentage of African American and Latino ninth-graders complete high school and graduate (see table on next page). Combining the eligibility rate for graduates with the percentage of ninth-graders who actually graduate shows that 3.5 percent of Latino high school students and 3.6 percent of African American high school students were eligible for UC in 2003. For this purpose, "high school students" is defined as ninth-graders four years earlier, adjusted for growth in the teenage population for each ethnic group.

Breaking down eligibility rates by both ethnicity and gender shows that the situation is even worse for male students. In all ethnic groups, graduation rates and eligibility rates for males are lower than for females, but the differences are greater for African Americans and Latinos. The lower high school graduation rate for male students, combined with the lower eligibility rate for male graduates, means that only 2.1 percent of Latino male students and 2.4 percent of African American male students were eligible for UC in 2003.

Eligibility rates for CSU are also low. Less than 6 percent of male Latino high school students and less than 7 percent of male African Americans students were eligible for CSU. This is particularly disturbing, because a university degree is now the minimum entrance requirement for many careers that provide a middle-class income.

### Eligibility rates for male students, 2003



This closer look at eligibility shows that the inequities in access to public higher education are more serious than implied by eligibility rates expressed as a percentage of high school graduates. The divisions in our society are likely to widen unless more is done to ensure that students from all backgrounds stay in school, have the opportunity to prepare for a university education, and actually graduate from high school.

More information on the Commission's eligibility study is in the Commission report *University Eligibility Study for the Class of 2003*.

See [www.cpec.ca.gov/eligibility](http://www.cpec.ca.gov/eligibility) for links to this report and other publications on eligibility issues.

### Percentage of ninth-graders completing high school

	2003 graduates as a percentage of 1999 ninth-grade enrollment		Apparent graduation rate	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
All ethnicities	67%	76%	63%	72%
African American	54%	66%	52%	65%
Asian	86%	94%	85%	93%
Latino	55%	66%	49%	60%
White	76%	83%	77%	83%

Commission calculations using graduation and enrollment data from the California Department of Education and population estimates from the California Department of Finance. Figures for California public high schools, including charter schools.

Apparent graduation rate is estimated by adjusting the figures for 2003 graduates as a percentage of 1999 ninth-graders to reflect the increase in the number of 18-year-olds in 2003 from the number of 14-year-olds in 1999. This figure may underestimate actual graduation rates to the extent that some ninth-graders are repeating that grade and some students transfer to private schools between ninth grade and graduation.